GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:58
ANSWERED ON:07.08.2013
US IMMIGRATION REFORMS BILL
Lagadapati Shri Rajagopal;Thamaraiselvan Shri R.

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the immigration reforms bill passed by the US Senate, if becomes a law, would adversely affect Indian interests;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the steps being taken by the Government to protect the interests of our IT professionals and students;

(d) whether the Government is contemplating to take up the issue before the WTO Disputes Settlement body; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHID)

(a) to (e) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (e) OF THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 58 REGARDING `US IMMIGRATION REFORMS BILL` FOR ANSWER ON 07.08.2013

(a) & (b) On 27 June 2013, the United States Senate passed Bill No. S.744, `The Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act 2013.` While the current Bill is not expected to impact adversely against foreign students, including from India, Indian IT industry has raised concerns over some measures in the Bill that relate to skilled non-immigrant visas, which, if brought into force, after the completion of US Congressional processes in both Houses, is likely to place more onerous requirements on HI-B/L-1 visa dependent firms including higher wages; enhanced audit by U.S. agencies; non-displacement guarantee/additional recruitment notice requirements; and higher visa fees.

(c) The concerns of Indian IT companies have been conveyed to the U.S. side at Ministerial levels during the recent meetings of Homeland Security Dialogue in May 2013, Strategic Dialogue in June 2013, and at the CEOs Forum in July 2013 by Home Minister, Finance Minister, Commerce & Industry Minister and External Affairs Minister. The Indian Embassy in Washington is working with IT industry to create more awareness in the US Congress on concerns of Indian IT companies regarding the Senate Bill.

(d) & (e) Government is examining the Senate Bill with regard to its WTO compatibility. However, the matter can only be taken up before the WTO Disputes Settlement body at an appropriate time once the Senate Bill becomes law.